

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 19059 101215Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1082

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 19059

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TH, VS, SREF

SUBJECT: DRUGGING OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AT UTAPAO

REF: STATE 213659

1. FOLLOWING REPLIES ARE KEYED TO QUESTIONS IN PARA 2  
OF REFTEL:

A) THOMAS HAMILTON, MICHAEL CARPENTER, LEONARD O'CONNOR  
AND BARBARA BODINE.

B) WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MS BODINE, THE FUNCTION OF THE  
EMBASSY OFFICERS WAS TO DETERMINE WHICH CAMBODIAN  
REFUGEES IN THE CAMP AT UTAPAO WERE ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE  
TO THE U.S. AND ASSIST IN PROCESSING THOSE REFUGEES FOR  
TRANSPORTATION TO RECEPTION CENTERS. (MS BODINE ASSISTED  
IN PROCESSING REFUGEES FOR MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS AT THE  
AIR FORCE HOSPITAL, WHICH WAS LOCATED AWAY FROM THE CAMP  
AND THE SITE OF THE INCIDENT IN QUESTION.) THESE OFFICERS  
HAD NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES WHO  
ENTERED THAILAND ON VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE PLANES AND WHO  
WERE THEN AIRLIFTED TO GUAM ALMOST IMMEDIATELY BY  
USAF. THESE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES WERE NOT PLACED IN THE  
CAMP BEING MAINTAINED FOR THE CAMBODIAN REFUGEES.

C. WHEN THE EMBASSY OFFICERS VISITED THE AREA WHERE  
THESE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES WERE BEING PROCESSED FOR THE  
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PAGE 02 BANGKO 19059 101215Z

LAST FLIGHT OUT OF UTAPAO, THEY BECAME AWARE THAT SOME

OF THE REFUGEES HAD PROBABLY BEEN SEDATED. THIS AWARENESS WAS BASED ON VISUAL OBSERVATION OF THE MOVEMENTS OF THE REFUGEES AS WELL AS REMARKS BEING MADE BY USAF PERSONNEL WHO WERE PRESENT. THE OFFICERS DID NOT WITNESS ANY SEDATION. THEY STATE THAT THEY WERE AT NO TIME CONSULTED NOR INFORMED BY THAI OR USAF OFFICIALS AT THE BASE THAT ANY FORCIBLE ACTION AFFECTING THESE REFUGEES WAS TO BE TAKEN.

D. AT THIS POINT RECOLLECTIONS VARY ABOUT HOW THE EMBASSY FIRST LEARNED THAT SEDATION HAD TAKEN PLACE. THE FIRST WORD MAY HAVE COME FROM THE EMBASSY OFFICERS AT UTAPAO OR IT MAY HAVE BEEN FROM A U.S. MILITARY MESSAGE ON THE SUBJECT.

2. ABOUT MID-AUGUST OSI ASKED EMBASSY'S PERMISSION TO QUESTION THAI OFFICIALS, SPECIFICALLY, VICE ADMIRAL SMUT SAHANAVIN WHOSE COMMAND INCLUDES UTAPAO, IN CONNECTION WITH DRUGGING INCIDENT. THIS REQUEST CAME IN WAKE OF NEWS-PAPER STORIES ON INCIDENT WHICH MENTIONED A THAI ROLE IN AFFIR. UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES, THAI OFFICIALS WOULD HAVE PERCEIVED QUESTIONING BY OSI AS CONSTITUTING INVESTIGATION OF THAI THEMSELVES BY AMERICANS IN THAILAND. APART FROM FACT THAT THEY WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY NOT HAVE CONSENTED TO BE INTERVIEWED, OR IF INTERVIEWED, WOULD HAVE MINIMIZED WHATEVER ROLE THEY PLAYED, THIS PROCEDURE WOULD HAVE AROUSED THEIR NATIONALISTIC INDISNATION AND JEOPARDIZED THEIR FUTURE COOPERATION WITH U.S. REFUGEE-RELATED ACTIVITIES IN THAILAND. EMBASSY EXPLAINED THIS TO OSI AND WITHHELD PERMISSION TO APPROACH THAI FOR QUESTIONING.

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